

Hala Qasqas

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Ph.D. Candidate | Islamic Art History

PhD candidate in Islamic Art History with extensive experience in researching the cultural and socio-urban history of Damascus. Specializing in the study of coffeehouses and shadow theatre in early modern Damascus, with a focus on political engagement and public recreations supported by major awards such as the SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship.

EDUCATION

Sep 2021	Ph.D. in Art History and Visual Studies
Present	<i>University of Victoria - Victoria, BC, Canada</i>
Jan 2019	Post-Graduate in 3D Animation & Visual Effects
Aug 2020	<i>Sheridan College - Oakville, ON, Canada</i>
Sep 2009	Master of Arts: Art History
May 2012	<i>Damascus University - Damascus, Syria</i>
Sep 2002	Bachelor of Arts: Interior Design
Feb 2007	<i>Damascus University - Damascus, Syria</i>

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sep 2023	Sessional Lecturer
Present	<i>University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada</i> Conduct lectures and seminars for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">AHVS 314: Gateway to Paradise: Islamic Gardens and Landscape.AHVS 357: Arts of Mediterranean IslamASVA191: Islamic Geometric Pattern
Feb 2022	Interior Design Instructor
Present	<i>Pacific Design Academy, Victoria, BC, Canada</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Taught courses including Space Planning, Design Projects, Design Development, AutoCAD, Lighting, and Portfolio.Developed and updated course materials, guided students through hands on projects, and mentored them on career paths and portfolio development.
Sep 2021	Teacher Assistant
Feb 2024	<i>University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada</i> Assisted in teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none">AHVS 120: Exploring World ArtAHVS 311F: Horror Video Games.AHVS 311E: History of Video Games and Interactive Media
Nov 2021	Research Assistant
Feb 2024	<i>University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborated on a project documenting the crafts of Damascus from the 19th to the 20th century.Contributed to research and website development for documenting Iraqi craft history from the 7th to the 20th century.

RESEARCH SKILLS

- Documentation and attention to detail
- Exceptional written communication
- Excellent research and translation skills (Arabic-English)
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Proficiency with primary sources and online databases
- Information organization and evaluation
- 3D graphics conversion using computer software.

LANGUAGES

- Arabic**
Native or bilingual proficiency
- English**
Full professional proficiency
- French**
Limited working proficiency

AFFILIATIONS

- 2024** | MESA, Middle East Studies Association
- 2024** | ICOMOS, The International Council on Monuments and Sites
- 2023** | ICOM, International Council of Museums
- 2022** | HIAA, Historian of Islamic Art Association

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 2021** | Damascus Heritage Archive Project
A community of professional researchers committed to conserving the Damascene cultural heritage, tangible and intangible.

Jan 2007	Senior Interior Architect
Jan 2019	<i>Futurism, Damascus, Syria</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led and managed communication with contractors, builders, and clients for 50+ projects across the Middle East. • Created detailed floor plans and schematic designs using AutoCAD and 3D perspectives.
Sep 2010	Teacher Assistant
Jun 2017	<i>Damascus University, Damascus, Syria</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted in teaching Interior Design Projects, graded assignments, and facilitated classroom activities and workshops.

AWARDS

2022-2025	Canada Graduate Scholarship Doctoral SSHRC Social Science Research Council	\$120,000
2022-2025	President's Research Scholarship Faculty of Graduate Studies at UVic	\$15,000
2022	Florence and Wallace Wilkinson Memorial Bursary at UVic	\$5,000
2021	Herbert Bertram Falkenstein Graduate Scholarship in Fine Arts at UVic	\$20,000
2021	Jeffrey Rubinoff Scholar Art as a Source of Knowledge Scholarship	\$2,000
2021-2023	University of Victoria Graduate Fellowship Art History & Visual Studies	\$36,000

CERTIFICATIONS

2022-01	French for Reading and Translation
2022-06	University of Wisconsin-Madison – Madison, USA
2018-01	General Art and Sciences (ESL)
2018-12	Sheridan College - Oakville, ON

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

- *Damascene Mosques in the Mamluk Era: Architectural-Historical Study.* (Damascus: Dar Ninawa, 2020)
- *History of Damascene Coffeeshouses.* (Damascus: Dar Ninawa, 2019)
- *Damascene Mosques in the Ottoman Era: Architectural-Historical Study.* (Damascus: Dar Ninawa, 2018)
- *Gardens Architecture: Study in the foundations of garden design and styles.* (Damascus: Dar Ninawa, 2017)
- *Islamic gardens: A Study of Islamic Gardens and their Constituent Elements.* (Damascus: Dar Ninawa, 2015)

BOOK CHAPTERS

- “Shadow Puppet from Damascus.” In *Medieval Islamic History in 50 Objects* (under review)
- “The Architecture of Sociability: Coffeeshouses and Urban Spaces in Early Modern Damascus.” In *Syrian Architectural History* (under review)

SOFTWARE

Microsoft Office



Adobe Creative Suite



Autodesk AutoCAD



Autodesk Maya



Autodesk 3Ds Max



Houdini



Nuke/Nuke Studio



Davinci Resolve



Zbrush



REFEREED JOURNAL PAPERS

- “Diplomacy and Architectural Ambience: Damascus in Renaissance Art.” Under Review (2024)
- “Traditional Artworks roles in Damascene Coffeehouses.” *Aleppo University Journal of Engineering Sciences* (2017).
- “Al-barrani the outside section of Damascus Bathhouse Social and Beauty Value.” *Damascus University Journal of Engineering Sciences* (2016).
- “A Study on Entertainment Signs of Old Time Festivals in Damascus.” *Damascus University Journal of Engineering Sciences* (2016).
- “Al-Badri and the Discourse of Beauties: A Study of the Concept of Islamic Garden.” *Journal of Architecture and Planning*, King Saud University 27, no. 2 (2015).
- “Ibn al-‘Awwam and the Book of al-Filāha: The Science of Gardening in Islamic Tradition.” *IUG Journal of Natural and Engineering Studies*, Islamic University-Gaza 22, no. 2 (2014).
- “Water in the Islamic Garden: Between the Physical and Symbolic.” *Aleppo University Journal of Engineering Sciences* 102 (2011).

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Unravelling the Socio-Urban Tapestry: Architectural Narratives and Cultural Insights from the 18th-Century Coffeehouses of Damascus” In *MESA ANNUAL MEETING*, Tucson, AZ (2024)
- “Oral History and Social Commentary: The Legacy of Shadow Puppetry in 18th-Century Damascus.” In *The 11th Annual Wollesen Memorial Graduate Symposium*, Toronto: University of Toronto (2024)
- “Liberation in a Cup: Coffee, Controversy, and Community in Damascus.” In *MISSC*, Montreal: McGill University (2024)
- “Unraveling the Socio-Urban Fabric: Architectural Insights from the 18th-Century Coffeehouses of Damascus.” In *MEICON*, Vancouver: Simon Fraser University (2024)
- “Urban Fabric and Architectural Narratives: Exploring the 18th-Century Coffeehouses of Damascus.” In *Visual Inputs*, Victoria: The University of Victoria (2024)
- “Coffeehouses of Damascus: Unveiling the Architectural and Historical Narratives.” In *Islamic Art History Research Workshop*, York: The University of York (2023)
- “Diplomacy and Architectural Ambience: Damascus in Renaissance Art.” In *Visual Inputs*, Victoria: The University of Victoria (2023)
- “The Legitimacy of Coffee and Coffeehouses in Damascus 1600-1800.” In *MEICON*, Vancouver: The University of British Columbia (2022)
- “The Visual Heritage of Popular Tales: Folk Art in Damascene Coffeehouses 1850-1950.” In *Visual Inputs*, Victoria: The University of Victoria (2022)
- “The Role of Women in Building Mosques during the Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras in Damascus”. In *Eye on the Mosques of Damascus*, Damascus: al-Takiyya al-Sulaimanyia (2016) In *Eye on the Mosques of Damascus*, Damascus: al-Takiyya al-Sulaimanyia (2016)